

Big Thunder, Little Rain: The Yellow Peril Framing of the Pandemic Campaign Against China

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Abstract

Yellow Peril ideology has long cast Chinese as cruel, deceitful, incompetent disease vectors. Many US elites now tie such notions to China's response to Covid-19. Their racialized framing of the drive to condemn and sue China however exemplifies a Chinese idiom—"big thunder, little rain" (雷声大, 雨点小)—which means noisy, yet ineffective. There are empirical obstacles to convincing the world of Chinese responsibility for the pandemic, such as that the virus spread much more from Europe and the US than from China, many Western states failed against the virus, and pandemic-related agitation against China has resulted in many anti-Asian actions. The ongoing claims are thus unlikely to be convincing beyond the Anglosphere, but still spread racism and advance a US-led anti-China mobilization.

I. Introduction: 21st Century Yellow Peril racism and Covid-19

1. Yellow Peril ideology has for a century and a half posited a threat to the West from East Asians, especially Chinese.¹ Its influence has waxed and waned based on international and domestic politics, but Yellow Peril views

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1 William F. Wu, *Chinese Americans in American Fiction, 1850-1940* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1982).

again pervade Western elite discussions of China and Chinese, above all in the US. Central to these discourses are claims that Chinese incompetence and malign political and cultural practices spread Covid-19 globally. For example, when a journalist quizzed Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) “about the cost of demonizing Asians in a land that has been historically intolerant of them, especially during pandemics,” he responded:

I think China is to blame because the culture where people eat bats and snakes and dogs and things like that, these viruses are transmitted from the animal to the people and that’s why China has been the source of a lot of these viruses like SARS, like MERS [Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome], the swine flu, and now the coronavirus. So, I think they have a fundamental problem, and I don’t object to geographically identifying where it’s coming from.

2. Contrary to Cornyn, however, MERS’s outbreak was in the Middle East and its origin in Africa; swine flu came from North America. A US journalist, writing about Cornyn’s remarks, observed that “To xenophobic ears in America, ‘China is to blame’ translates into ‘Asians are to blame’ at street level, which may explain why Asian Americans of all backgrounds are reporting more assaults and acts of bias and discrimination leveled at them and triggered by COVID-19.”² Cornyn, by the way, condemned Chinese for eating snakes, but has praised Texans for doing so.³

3. Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), promoting her bill to allow lawsuits against China for unleashing a “biological weapon” against the US, stated that “China is not our friend. They are our enemy [and] they sent the virus to us.”⁴ She later added that “China has a 5,000-year history of cheating and stealing. Some things will never change.”⁵ Republican Party operative Michael Caputo wrote that “millions of Chinese suck the blood out of rabid bats as an appetizer and eat the ass out of anteaters”; the next month he was

2 Tony Norman, “When a Slur Sounds Nothing Like the Truth,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Mar. 20, 2020).

3 Katie Shepherd, “John Cornyn Criticized Chinese for Eating Snakes. He Forgot about the Rattlesnake Roundups Back in Texas,” *Washington Post* (Mar. 19, 2020).

4 Sarah Midkiff, “Why Marsha Blackburn’s Stop Covid Act is Rooted in Xenophobia,” *Refinery29* (May 7, 2020), (www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/05/9784868/marsha-blackburn-stop-covid-act-china-twitter).

5 “Tennessee Senator Slurs China for Cheating and Stealing, and Top Chinese Journalist Calls Her a ‘Lifetime B—’” *Business Insider* (Dec. 3, 2020).

made US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) spokesman. When journalist Chris Hayes wrote that the US was doing the worst job of any country handling Covid-19, Caputo wrote, “Who knew @chrishayes is Chinese?”⁶

4. The inceptive Yellow Peril ideology of the late 19th and first half of the 20th Century focused on a decrepit, crowded imperial China exporting its population to overwhelm the white world or on a potentially revived China that would rampage against the West after absorbing its technology. Twenty-first Century Yellow Peril is about countering a “socialist” China imagined as aggressively expanding.⁷ Such ideas connect domestic white racism with a “Red Menace” China threat.⁸ Longstanding interlinked Yellow Peril tropes (recurrent themes) have been marshalled since the SARS-CoV-2 novel coronavirus appeared in late 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei, China. One is that “the cruel Chinese” have no regard for animal or human life. A second trope is that Chinese spread disease, including by consuming “weird foods”.⁹ A third theme is Chinese as deceitful incompetents, seen in the US government claim that China started a global pandemic and did not tell the world.¹⁰ Yellow Peril tropes in mainstream Western Covid-19 discourse are now integral to an Anglosphere elite mobilization against China.¹¹ Covid-19 lawsuits against China are a lawfare tactic within that “New Cold War” mobilization. They are beset by obstacles and will likely fail, but even if they do, lawfare will have

6 Bess Levin, “Michael Caputo, Trump’s New HHS Spokesman, Prepped for Job by Writing Wildly Racist Tweets,” *Vanity Fair* (Apr. 23, 2020).

7 Christos Lynteris, “Yellow Peril Epidemics: The Political Ontology of Degeneration and Emergence,” in: Franck Bille and Soren Urbansky (eds.), *Yellow Perils: China Narratives in the Contemporary World* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2018), 39-59.

8 Kaiser Kuo and William Yuen Yee, “White Privilege, American Hegemony and the Rise of China,” *SupChina* (Aug. 21, 2020), (<https://supchina.com/2020/08/21/white-privilege-american-hegemony-and-the-rise-of-china/>).

9 “黄祸论在欧洲：从清朝到新中国歧视华人从未停止 (Yellow Peril in Europe: from the Qing Dynasty to New China discrimination against ethnic Chinese has never stopped), 环球时报 (Jan. 23, 2015); 张云, “日学者：新”黄祸论”必遭文明社会唾弃.” (Japanese scholar: ‘New Yellow Peril’ must be cast aside by civilized society), 参考消息 (联合早报) (Feb. 14, 2020), (www.imsilkroad.com/news/p/400912.html).

10 “State Department Official Confronts China’s Ambassador about Disinformation,” *Washington Post* (Mar. 14, 2020).

11 Gideon Rachman, “Anglosphere Sees Eye to Eye on China,” *Financial Times* (Feb. 9, 2021).

reinforced anti-Chinese racism, unless the Yellow Peril tropes are shown to underlie the mobilization and to be empirically unsound.

5. In what follows, we first show that Western political and media figures invoke longstanding Yellow Peril tropes in promoting Covid-19 lawfare against China. We then discuss the lack of an empirical basis for attributing pandemic injuries abroad to China. We conclude that because the difficulties these actions present are obvious and likely insurmountable, they are advanced not to redress injuries, but to mobilize against the US's "most serious competitor," China.¹² Their Yellow Peril underpinnings guarantee that Chinese in general will be adversely affected.

II. The trope of "the cruel Chinese"

6. Orientalist and non-Orientalist views of China and Chinese have existed in the West,¹³ but Yellow Peril agitation created a powerful negative narrative through tropes that were revived with Covid-19.¹⁴ "Chinese cruelty" is framed as disregard for human life,¹⁵ an idea present since the first burst of Yellow Peril ideology in the 1870s.¹⁶ An Australian newspaper asserted in 1892 that the "the Chinese are cruel conquerors" with a "love for torture."¹⁷ A British professor wrote in 1897 "that the Chinese are cruel is one of those axioms that need no proof."¹⁸ A popular US book on the Qing Dynasty's fall

12 "America is Back': Biden Says US will Confront 'Most Serious Competitor' China," ANI (Feb. 5, 2021).

13 Ji Fengyuan, "The West and China: Discourses, Agendas and Change," *Critical Discourse Studies* 17:4 (2017), 325-340.

14 Stanford Lyman, "The Yellow Peril Mystique: Origins and Vicissitudes of a Racist Discourse," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 13:4 (2000), 683-747.

15 Eric Hayot, *The Hypothetical Mandarin: Sympathy, Modernity and Chinese Pain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009); Timothy Brook, *Death by a Thousand Cuts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Andrea Bachner, "Violent Media: Beyond the Stereotype of Chinese Cruelty," lecture, University of Michigan (Apr. 12, 2016), (www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4MRMWxcvP0); Li Chen, *Chinese Law in Imperial Eyes: Sovereignty, Justice and Transcultural Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 174-180.

16 "Chinese Cruelty: Appeal to President Hayes for American Interference," *New York Times* (Dec. 4, 1879).

17 "Chinese Torture," *The Western Mail* (Perth) (Jan. 2, 1892), (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/33069501>).

18 Professor Douglas, "Crime in Cathay," *English Illustrated Magazine*, 17 (May 1897), 143.

in 1911-1912 averred that, "We all know that the Chinese are cruel, that they have no sympathies in the usual Western sense; we know that they delight in the torture of all things that have life."¹⁹ The UK/US novel and film character Fu Manchu embodied the trope from the 1920s to the 1970s, with a "key selling point of the films the motif of the cruel Chinese."²⁰ The Chinese cruelty notion was widespread in the US: popular magazine *Life* titled a luridly illustrated 1936 article "The Cruel Chinese."²¹ US respondents to a 1950s study by MIT political scientist Harold Isaacs said Chinese were "cruel, savage, ruthless, barbaric, ferocious, violent and brutal, with no regard for human life or suffering [and are] cruel and brutal to animals."²² US elite figures, such as Vietnam War commander William Westmoreland²³ and 1980s United Nations ambassador Jean Kirkpatrick, claimed Chinese do not value human life.²⁴

7. Assertions of "Chinese cruelty" parallel those of "Jewish cruelty" toward people and animals. The Nazis took up such claims in the Weimar era (1919-1933), absorbing movements against kosher butchering and circumcision and intensifying anti-Jewish rhetoric that posited that the practices evidenced Jewish cruelty and the impossibility of integrating Jews in Germany.²⁵ Yellow Peril ideology includes "perceptions of Chinese culture as simply one of cruel and unbridled animal consumption," as Bowdoin College professor Belinda Kong puts it.²⁶ Chinese cruelty is contrasted with purported Western humanitarianism, just as "Jewish cruelty" through ritual slaughter of animals has

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- 19 Edward J. Dingle, *China's Revolution* (New York: McBride, Nast and Co., 1912), 138 ([www.gutenberg.org/files/ 63233/63233-h/63233-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/63233/63233-h/63233-h.htm)).
 - 20 Robert Bickers, *Changing British Attitudes to China and the Chinese, 1928-1931*. Unpublished PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (1992), 52 (<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/33130953.pdf>).
 - 21 (<https://forums.spacebattles.com/threads/the-cruel-chinese.374224/>).
 - 22 Harold Isaacs, *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day, 1958), 105.
 - 23 Derrick Jackson, "The Westmoreland Mindset," *Boston Globe* (July 20, 2005).
 - 24 Cal Thomas, "China's Espionage Coup," *Baltimore Sun* (May 31, 1999).
 - 25 Robin Judd, *Contested Rituals: Circumcision, Kosher Butchering and Jewish Political Life in Germany, 1843-1933* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 134; Paola Tartakoff, "From Conversion to Ritual Murder: Re-Contextualizing the Circumcision Charge," *Medieval Encounters* 24 (2018), 361-389.
 - 26 Belinda Kong, "How Chinese People Came Together when Separated by Quarantine, Creating Hope, Humor and Art," *The Conversation* (Mar. 18, 2020), (<https://theconversation.com/how-chinese-people-came-together-when-separated-by-quarantine-creating-hope-humor-and-art-133423>).

been contrasted with “an overtly Christian ideal of humane treatment of animals across time and borders.”²⁷ Rutgers University professor of medicine Martin Blaser has also noted common historic and recent accusations of Jews and Chinese as disease vectors.²⁸ Assertions that Chinese are cruel are often camouflaged as attacks against the 95 million-member Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in much the same way anti-Jewish discourse, including about Covid-19, is directed against “Zionists.”²⁹ Trump supporters elide China, Chinese, and the CCP; thus, his lawyer Lin Wood speaking of the 2020 “election steal,” tweeted, “Over time, we have learned that the Democrats were joined by CCP & other foreign countries.”³⁰

8. North American political figures continue to imply that Chinese are cruel. In 2019, US Senate Minority leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) stated that “[the CCP] is cruel and relentless in cracking down on any dissent”. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) has said Chinese authorities have “ordered a cruel, ruthless and systematic crackdown on ethnic minorities”.³¹ A Canadian ex-intelligence official now at a leading think tank claimed in 2020 that, “For the Chinese Communist Party, the party is the only life that really matters.”³² Because “[t]he US-dominated media portrayal of and reportage on China molds the opinion of the audience, including the Chinese overseas, wherever their programming is carried”³³ and privileging of whiteness exists among

27 David Fraser, *Anti-Shechita Prosecutions in the Anglo-American World* (Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2018).

28 Gabriel Geschler, “How Jews have Fared During Pandemics Throughout History,” *Jewish News of Northern California* (Mar. 19, 2020), (www.jweekly.com/2020/03/19/how-jews-have-fared-during-times-of-pandemic/).

29 Kenneth L. Marcus, “Anti-Zionism as Racism: Campus Anti-Semitism and the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 15:3 (2007), 837-891; “Coronavirus and the Plague of Anti-Semitism,” Community Security Trust, 2020 (<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/d/9/Coronavirus%20and%20the%20plague%20of%20antisemitism.1586276450.pdf>).

30 Lin Wood (Jan. 2, 2021), (<https://twitter.com/LLinWood/status/1345065243345641475>).

31 “Schumer Calls for Swift Senate Passage of Bipartisan Legislation Reaffirming American Support for Human Rights and Democracy in Hong Kong,” GPO (Nov. 19, 2019); “US Lawmakers Renew Calls for Sanctions on China Following Document Leak on Xinjiang Abuses,” GPO (Nov. 18, 2019).

32 J. Michael Cole, “The Coronavirus Epidemic will not be China’s Chernobyl Moment,” *Globe & Mail* (Mar. 11, 2020).

33 Wei Djao, *Being Chinese: Voices from the Diaspora* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 199.

diaspora Chinese and even in China,³⁴ some co-ethnics also claim Chinese are cruel. For example, British-Chinese writer Jung Chang has said “What has marked Chinese society is its level of cruelty [...]”.³⁵

9. In the pandemic, US rightwing politicians and their allies elsewhere have implied that Chinese are cruel. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) attributed US Covid-19 deaths to Chinese willfulness, deceit, and “hard-heartedness.”³⁶ National Security Advisor Robert O’Brien said “the Chinese ‘enjoyed’ the [Covid-19] chaos in the US and expressed their ‘joy’ with social media posts.”³⁷ Rep. Tim Burchett (R-TN) put it that in “taking full advantage of [COVID-19’s outbreak] [...] how heartless they (the Chinese) are in their ambition for world domination.”³⁸ Reps. Jim Banks (R-IN), Dan Crenshaw (R-TX), and Lance Gooden (R-TX) wrote about Chinese officials’ “duplicitous, ineffective, and cruel” response to Covid-19.³⁹ Outside the US, “Tropical Trump” Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro termed Chinese “heartless”. His Minister of Education said Chinese propagated the epidemic to gain political advantages.⁴⁰ An analyst at Australia’s rightwing Lowy Institute has written of “the systemic failures and cruel incompetence” of China’s initial response to COVID-19.⁴¹

34 “The Reconfiguration of Whiteness in China: Privileges, Precariousness, and Racialized Performances,” European Commission, 2019 (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/817868>); Zhang Chenchun, “Right-wing Populism with Chinese Characteristics? Identity, Otherness and Global Imaginaries in Debating World Politics Online,” *European Journal of International Relations* 26:1 (2019), 88-115.

35 (www.quotehd.com/quotes/jung-chang-jung-chang-what-has-marked-chinese-society-is-its-level-of-cruelty-not).

36 “US Senators Debate Changing Law to Allow Americans to Sue China for Shock Reason,” *Express* (June 24, 2020).

37 “Pompeo Assures that China is Trying to Exploit the Death of George Floyd Politically,” *Europe World News* (June 6, 2020), (www.europeworldnews.com/pompeo-assures-that-china-is-trying-to-exploit-the-death-of-george-floyd-politically/).

38 Eric Olander, “Top US Diplomat for Africa: China Gets the Chutzpah of the Year Award for their Pretended Response to Covid-19,” *China Africa Project* (Aug. 4, 2020), (<https://chinaafricaproject.com/2020/08/04/top-u-s-diplomat-for-africa-china-gets-the-chutzpah-of-the-year-award-for-their-pretend-response-on-covid/>).

39 (<https://gooden.house.gov/sites/gooden.house.gov/files/5.18.2020%20-%20Gooden%3ABanks%3ACrenshaw%20-%20Magnitsky%20Act%20Letter.pdf>).

40 “Brazil Stumbles into New China Diplomat Row over Virus,” *AP* (Apr. 7, 2020).

41 Natasha Kassam, “China is Rewriting Coronavirus History and Nobody will Stop it,” *Nikkei Asian Review* (Mar. 23, 2020).

10. The claim that Chinese disregard human life is belied however by scientists' comparisons between China and the US's seriousness in addressing Covid-19. Harvard University disease specialist Marc Lipsitch put it that "[The US] government's response was something like one per cent—or less—than what China did."⁴² In June 2020, University of California San Francisco and Duke University global health specialists Dean Jamison and Gavin Yamey did a *Time* magazine podcast entitled "The US Response to Covid-19 is Worse than China's. 100 Times Worse." US deaths per million (dpm) were then 100 times higher than China's, even factoring in undercounts that affect fatality totals in both countries.⁴³ By September 18, 2021, the ratio was 690:1 and, discounting the outbreak province, Hubei, and considering the remainder of China, where 95% of Chinese live, the US/China fatality ratio is more than 23,000:1. China, with 17.9% of the world's people, had one-tenth of 1% of global deaths; the US, with 4.2% of the world's population, had 14.7% of fatalities.⁴⁴ Harvard Medical School professor Dr. William Haseltine has credited the numbers provided by China.⁴⁵

11. There are also subjective evaluations of how the Chinese and US governments performed in the pandemic and, implicitly, whether they devalue life. They disfavor the US even in countries allied with it. A Pew survey in 11 Western countries, Japan, and South Korea, asked whether the US had done a good job with the pandemic. In all 13 countries, China rated higher than the US.⁴⁶

12. The US's poor showing was despite its much greater socio-economic potential to deal with epidemics. US per capita income is nominally 4.5 times China's and more than three times in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms; the wealth-per-capita ratio is nominally 11:1. In 2020, China's healthcare

42 Robin Wright, "The Global Panic over the Coronavirus," *New Yorker* (Mar. 2, 2020).

43 (www.listennotes.com/podcasts/times-top-stories/column-the-us-response-to-ECqTDPmliZ1/), (June 11, 2020).

44 "Coronavirus," *Worldometer* (Sept. 18, 2021), (www.worldometers.info/coronavirus).

45 "Why America Should Look to China to Contain Covid-19," *Forbes* (Jan. 10, 2021), (www.forbes.com/sites/williamhaseltine/2021/01/14/why-america-should-look-to-china-to-contain-covid-19/?sh=15cb9813501f).

46 "US Image Plummets Internationally as Most Say Country has Handled Coronavirus Badly," *Pew* (Sept. 15, 2020), (www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/09/15/us-image-plummets-internationally-as-most-say-country-has-handled-coronavirus-badly/).

spending was “half the global average, and 1/14th the U.S. medical outlay.”⁴⁷ US healthcare spending is 17% of GDP, double the developed country (OECD) average and the US was first among 167 countries in the 2019 Global Health Security Index (GHSI), while China was 51st.⁴⁸ The US is much better equipped to deal with severe cases than China: its hospital ICU beds per 100,000 people are 10 times that of China.⁴⁹ Higher population density also negatively affects how well a country does in a pandemic.⁵⁰ China’s 153 per sq. km is 4.5 times the US’s 33.7.

13. China’s government exerted itself at least as much as Western countries to preserve lives in an emergency, thereby negating claims of Chinese cruelty. As of August 26, 2021, 36 European countries, plus the US, had >1000 Covid-19 dpm, with fatality rates ranging from 335 to 2,000 times that of China.

III. Chinese as disease vectors via “weird foods”

14. In Anglosphere Yellow Peril agitations, Chinese have been labelled primary disease vectors for many contagions.⁵¹ With Covid-19, the disease-

47 Jeff Desjardins, “Visualizing the Wealth of Nations,” Visual Capitalist (July 4, 2019), (www.visualcapitalist.com/map-wealth-of-nations/); Craig Mellow, “The Coronavirus Outbreak Will End, and China Will Remain, With All Its Strengths and Weaknesses,” Barron’s (Feb. 14, 2020).

48 “Global Health Security Index,” NTI and Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, 2019, (www.ghsindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-Global-Health-Security-Index.pdf); Brad Sawyer and Cynthia Cox, “How Does Health Spending in the US Compare to Other Countries?” Health System Tracker (Dec. 7, 2018), (www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/health-spending-u-s-compare-countries/#item-start); “World Economic Outlook: GDP Per Capita,” International Monetary Fund (Oct. 2019), (www.imf.org/en/Publications/SPROLLS/world-economic-outlook-databases#sort=%40imfdate%20descending).

49 Niall McCarthy, “The Countries with The Most Critical Care Beds Per Capita,” Forbes (Mar. 12, 2020).

50 Richard Horton, *The Covid-19 Catastrophe* (London: Polity, 2020).

51 Patricia Roy, *White Man’s Province: BC Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014); Barry McCarran, *The Global Irish and the Chinese: Migration, Exclusion and Foreign Relations Among Empires, 1784-1904*, PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2016, (https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/1040727/McCarran_georgetown_0076D_13381.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y); Erin Tresch, “They are Vile and Polluted in a Filthy Degree’: An Analysis of Health and Disease Rhetoric During the Anti-Chinese Movement, 1849-1900,” MA thesis, University of Tulsa, 2020, (<https://search.proquest.com/docview/2407627987?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>).

spreaders trope is tied to the “cruel Chinese” trope through the idea that a pandemic emerged from heedless consumption of wildlife by Chinese who buy it in marketplace centers of animal cruelty.⁵² Western media assumed, when the outbreak began⁵³ and for months thereafter,⁵⁴ that wildlife sold in a Wuhan “wet market” was the virus’ point of origin. Wuhan’s 50,000 sq. meter Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market (武汉华南海鲜批发市场), where 1,180 people worked, had 653 stalls, but only 10 sold live wild animals.⁵⁵ There is no evidence the market was where the virus’ animal-to-human transmission began.⁵⁶

15. Neither bats or pangolins, animals assumed to be involved in creating the epidemic, were sold at four Wuhan markets, including Huanan, that were repeatedly visited from May 2017 to November 2019 by researchers from Oxford University and China West Normal University who were monitoring tick-born disease.⁵⁷ The virus was not spread by consuming these animals: SARS-Cov-2 has a polybasic cleavage site genetic mutation that coronaviruses in bats and pangolins lack, making direct SARS-Cov-2 transmission from such animals very unlikely.⁵⁸ Scientists affirm that the question of which

52 Phoebe Chow, *Britain’s Imperial Retreat from China* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2017).

53 David Dodwell, “China Coronavirus Outbreak Means the World is Once Again Gripped by the Six-Year Pandemic Panic Syndrome,” *South China Morning Post* (Jan. 27, 2020).

54 Gideon Rachman, “China’s Covid Pride Could be Premature,” *Financial Times* (Oct. 27, 2020).

55 John Power and Simone McCarthy, “WHO’s Coronavirus Detectives Look to Wuhan Market as Undisclosed Map Surfaces,” *South China Morning Post* (Dec. 15, 2020).

56 Kate Holland, “Sorry Conspiracy Theorists. Study Concludes Covid-19 is Not a Laboratory Construct,” *ABC News* (Mar. 27, 2020); “Trump Officials are Said to Press Spies to Link Virus and Wuhan Labs,” *New York Times* (Apr. 30, 2020); Qin Chen and Tom Leung, “Bats, a Wet Market, and Many Theories: What We Know about the Origin of the Coronavirus,” *Inkstone* (May 1, 2020), (www.inkstone.news.com/science/bats-wet-market-and-many-theories-what-we-know-about-origin-coronavirus/article/3082414).

57 Xiao Xiao, et al., “Animal Sales from Wuhan Wet Markets Immediately Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic,” *Scientific Reports* 2021:11 (www.researchgate.net/scientific-contributions/Zhao-Min-Zhou-2076875556).

58 David Cynoski, “Mystery Deepens over Animal Source of Coronavirus,” *Nature* (Feb. 26, 2020); Kristian Andersen, et al., “The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2,” *Nature Medicine* (Mar. 17, 2020), (www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0820-9); “Viruses May have been Spreading among Humans for Decades, Study Says,” *South China Morning Post* (Mar. 30, 2020).

animals were the natural reservoir and intermediate species of SARS-Cov-2 is still open. A domestic animal or even humans may have been the outbreak's direct source.⁵⁹ After outbreaks among seafood vendors at Hong Kong wet markets, leading Covid-19 scientific advisor, Hong Kong University (HKU) Professor Yuen Kwok-yung, stated that cats, rats and cockroaches may have spread the virus.⁶⁰ A study by HKU microbiologists noted that,

The close relatedness among SARS-CoV-2 strains suggested that the Wuhan outbreak probably originated from a point source with subsequent human-to-human transmission, in contrast to the polyphyletic origin of [camels-to-human-transmitted] Middle East respiratory syndrome, [and] no animal samples in the market were reported to be positive. Moreover, the first identified case-patient and other early case-patients had not visited the market, suggesting the possibility of an alternative source.⁶¹

16. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, "We saw the reports about the Chinese wildlife markets that describe exactly where the virus originated from."⁶² Studies have found however that the first Wuhan victim and five of the initial seven victims were not linked to the market. The virus may derive from elsewhere, but was amplified in the market, creating an initial Wuhan expansion around December 8, 2019 and another on January 6, 2020. Georgetown University infectious diseases specialist Daniel Lucey said, "The virus came into that marketplace before it came out of that marketplace" ⁶³ and the source could have been market workers or visitors.⁶⁴

59 Graham Readfearn, "How did Coronavirus Start and Where did it Come From? Was it Really Wuhan's Animal Market?", *Guardian* (Apr. 28, 2020).

60 "Cats, Rats, Roaches Suspected Carriers at Wet Markets," *Standard* (Aug. 5, 2020).

61 Susanne K.P. Lau, et al., "Possible Bat Origin of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 26:7 (July 2020), 1542-1547.

62 "There will Be a Time for Assigning Blame," *Bild* (Apr. 2020), (www.bild.de/politik/international/bild-international/mike-pompeo-on-bild-live-china-will-be-lia-ble-for-the-damage-done-by-coronavirus-70022820.bild.html).

63 Huang Chaolin, et al. 2020. "Clinical Features of Patients Infected with 2019 Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China," *The Lancet* 395, no. 10223 (Jan. 24, 2020), 497-506; Yu Wen-Bin, "Decoding Evolution and Transmissions of Novel Pneumonia Coronavirus Using the Whole Genomic Data," *ChinaXiv.org* (Feb. 21, 2020), (www.chinaxiv.org/abs/202002.00033).

64 "Trump Officials are Said to Press Spies to Link Virus and Wuhan Labs," *New York Times* (Apr. 30, 2020).

17. City University of Hong Kong epidemiologist Dirk Pfeiffer has stated that, “Maybe people got it somewhere else, took it to the market and, for some reason, the market became the first focus of the transmission.”⁶⁵ Epidemiologist Mike Ryan, who heads the World Health Organization (WHO) Health Emergencies Program, has said human cases preceded the outbreak and the market was a likely amplification point, but whether “by human, animal or environmental spread is not yet known.”⁶⁶ Wuhan infectious disease specialist Shi Zhengli has said “we did not detect any SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acids in frozen animal samples. The market may just be a crowded location where a cluster of early novel coronavirus patients were found.”⁶⁷ Leading virologist Zhong Nanshan has noted “only traces of the virus in samples taken at the market,” found in the non-organic environment, not in animals.⁶⁸ Some 336 “frozen animal carcasses” at the market were tested; all were negative.⁶⁹ Virologists also sampled farmed animals and livestock around Hubei, but “did not detect any SARS CoV-2 nucleic acids in these samples.”⁷⁰

18. Initial speculation that the virus arose from consuming or handling animals was unsupported, but gave impetus to discourses of Chinese disregard for human and animal lives by eating wildlife. A *New York Times* article and other sources termed Chinese “omnivorous”, implying they are undiscerning in eating or “eat weird things”. The article listed “unusual fare” assertedly sold in the Wuhan marketplace.⁷¹ Such portrayals likely convinced some Westerners that Chinese food consumption created the pandemic. A fall 2020 survey in 13 European States offered respondents choices about the virus’s origins. An animals-to-humans “natural jump” was the preferred

65 Qin and Leung, Bats.

66 “China Gives Pledge on Access for COVID Origins Probe: WHO,” Reuters (Nov. 24, 2020).

67 Shi Zhengli, “Reply to Science Magazine” (July 24, 2020), (www.sciencemag.org/sites/default/files/Shi%20Zhengli%20Q%26A.pdf).

68 “Coronavirus Origin Research Hit by Political Agendas, China’s ‘Sars Hero’ Says,” South China Morning Post (May 27, 2020).

69 Simone McCarthy, “WHO-Backed Probes Move Forward to Try to Shed Light on Early Days of Coronavirus,” South China Morning Post (Nov. 13, 2020).

70 Shi Zhengli, “Reply to Science” (July 15, 2020), (www.sciencemag.org/sites/default/files/Shi%20Zhengli%20Q%26A.pdf).

71 Steven Lee Myers, “In China’s Markets, a Thriving Lab for Viruses,” *New York Times* (Jan. 26, 2020). “Wuhan Virus: Rats and Live Wolf Pups on the Menu at China Food Market Linked to Virus Outbreak,” AFP (Jan. 22, 2020).

explanation in Italy, France, Russia, Germany, and Latvia. In Poland, Czechia, Serbia, Hungary, and Spain, the leading choice was artificial creation in a Chinese lab and intentional spread to the world. In Sweden and Britain, some 50% thought the virus spread “due to Chinese people eating bats and other wild animals.”⁷² WHO has stated however that “it is highly unlikely that people can contract Covid-19 from food” and “so far, we have not seen evidence of people getting Covid-19 from consuming food: Covid-19 is not a food-borne illness.” University of Otago public health specialist Michael Baker has said “environment-to-human transmission is [...] far less of a risk than the spread of respiratory droplets and aerosols between people.” Only 13 of 873,475 frozen food samples tested in China were contaminated.⁷³

19. Wet markets and wildlife sales in China should also not be conflated, as they have been in Anglosphere countries.⁷⁴ Only a tiny portion of wet market sales involve wildlife.⁷⁵ Covid-19-related discourses hardly note that only a small and declining percentage of Chinese eat wildlife⁷⁶ and many other peoples also consume wildlife, although the Westerners among them are not condemned as peoples for doing so.⁷⁷ The proportion of vegetarians in China is

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- 72 Richard Q. Turksanyi, et al., “European Public Opinion About China in the Age of Covid-19” (Nov. 2020), 24 (https://ceias.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COMP-poll-report_2.pdf).
 - 73 Nadia Lam, “China has Zeroed in on Frozen Food Imports as it Tries to Keep a Lid on Covid-19,” *South China Morning Post* (Nov. 14, 2020).
 - 74 Bradley Blakeman, “China Must Close Down Wet Markets Now,” *The Hill* (Apr. 1, 2020), (<https://thehill.com/opinion/international/490528-china-must-close-down-wet-markets-now>); Dan Wooton, “China’s Cruel Wet Markets that Caused Coronavirus and Brought the World to Its Knees Should be Banned,” *News.com.au* (Mar. 28, 2020); “China Must Stamp Out Markets Where Wild Animals are Sold and Then Killed,” *Steve Cardownie, Edinburghnews* (Mar. 18, 2020), (www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/coronavirus-china-must-stamp-out-markets-where-wild-animals-are-sold-then-killed-steve-cardownie-2481637).
 - 75 Qin and Leung, Bats; Joshua Cho, “Mainstream Media’s Racist Trope: Blaming COVID-19 on China’s ‘Wet Markets,’” *Salon* (May 8, 2020), (www.salon.com/2020/05/08/mainstream-medias-racist-trope-blaming-covid-19-on-chinas-wet-markets_partner/).
 - 76 Li Zhang and Feng Yin, “Wildlife Consumption and Conservation Awareness in China: a Long Way to Go,” *Biodiversity and Conservation* 23:9 (2014), 2371-2381; “SARS Outbreak Failed to Halt China’s Exotic Wildlife Meat Trade,” *AFP* (Jan. 26, 2020).
 - 77 Jennifer Chiat, “‘Not Just China’ Strangest Foods Around the World,” *Foodie* (Feb. 17, 2020) (www.afoodieworld.com/jenifferchiat/not-just-china-strangest-foods-around-the-world); Jonathan Kolby, “Coronavirus, Pangolins and Racism: Why Conservationism and Prejudice Shouldn’t Mix,” *NBC News* (Feb. 15, 2020);

also the same or higher than in the US and some European countries. It is growing, especially among the young and middle class, while among the whole population meat sales are declining.⁷⁸

20. Anthropologists who work on animal-to-human transmission of pathogens—zoonotic diseases—have said the *New York Times* article “consciously described [the Chinese] markets in a way that would be aesthetically unacceptable to its western audience” and that the “focus on exotic food consumption in China often relies on Orientalism and is in some cases tinged with anti-Chinese sentiment,” through presenting “images [that] communicate a sense of disgust toward the eating habits of the Chinese.” Most marketed wildlife in China is raised in captivity, by farmers who could not otherwise subsist in China’s industrialized agriculture. Anthropological fieldwork found that China’s Center for Disease Control (CDC) and local authorities regularly inspect wet markets and that market closings after prior epidemics led to an “uncontrollable black market.”⁷⁹ UK NGO Traffic wildlife trade expert Dr. Richard Thomas has said “wild-sourced meat is so important for the livelihoods of millions of people in China” and a ban would make it “a lot harder to monitor and regulate.”⁸⁰

21. Illegal hunting, procurement, transport, and import/export of wildlife was nevertheless made punishable in China in late 2020 by up to ten years’ imprisonment and fines.⁸¹ A revised Animal Epidemic Prevention Law bolstered inspection of wild animals, whose use for non-meat purposes is now also “subject to strict approval procedures, inspection and quarantine measures.” Governments at county-level and above can ban live trading of livestock

China Must Stamp Out; Per Erikson Lyung, et al., “Eat Prey and Love: Game Meat Consumption and Attitudes Toward Hunting,” *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 36 (2012), 669-675.

78 “Vegetarianism by Country,” Wikipedia, 2020 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vegetarianism_by_country); “More Chinese are Turning Vegetarian,” PTI (Feb. 25, 2018).

79 Christos Lynteris and Lyle Fearnley, “Why Shutting Down Chinese ‘Wet Markets’ Could be a Terrible Mistake,” *The Conversation* (Jan. 31, 2020) (<http://theconversation.com/why-shutting-down-chinese-wet-markets-could-be-a-terrible-mistake-130625>).

80 “‘Pushing it Underground!’ China Expert Blasts Australia’s Call for Wet Market Ban,” *Express* (Apr. 30, 2020), (www.express.co.uk/news/world/1275795/china-wet-market-australia-coronavirus-covid19-bats-pangolin-wildlife-trade-spt).

81 Jane Cai and Guo Rai, “Game Over for China’s Wildlife Food Trade, but Does Ban Go Far Enough?” *South China Morning Post* (Dec. 30, 2020).

and poultry in certain areas.⁸² The number of protected wild animal species has risen from 453 to 980, with hunting and trafficking punishable. More than 15,000 people were prosecuted in China for wildlife crimes in 2020's first nine months, a two-thirds increase over those months in 2019.⁸³

22. Western media largely ignore or dismiss Chinese efforts to curb wildlife consumption however, while not relating Western wildlife consumption to the spread of disease. A study released in August, 2021, based on a US Department of Agriculture (USDA) survey of more than 600 samples from wild white-tailed deer, was the first to detect the virus in animals found in the wild. It determined that nearly half the sample had antibodies that indicate infection by Covid-19's virus. One infection dated from 2019 and some others dated from early 2020, before the first confirmed coronavirus cases among Americans. The study indicated that infected deer may be able to spread the virus to cattle, humans, and other species.⁸⁴ The US is the major Western country where wildlife is consumed, with its hunters annually killing some 6m wild white-tailed deer, whose meat could account for 1.36b meals. The US northeast, from which most of the USDA survey samples derived, is the center of such hunting. The testing of residents living nearby the infected deer might reveal whether there were early transmissions from the wild animals to residents that allowed the virus to more readily adapt to humans.⁸⁵

IV. Chinese "deceit and incompetence"

23. A Yellow Peril trope of Chinese as duplicitous and inept has existed since Britain and France's Opium Wars against China in the 1840s and

82 Wang Xiaodong, "Animal Trade Placed Under More Scrutiny," *China Daily*, (Jan. 23, 2021).

83 "China Adds More than 500 Species to Wildlife Protection," *Reuters* (Feb. 6, 2021), (www.reuters.com/article/us-china-environment-wildlife/china-adds-more-than-500-species-to-wildlife-protection-list-idUSKBN2A604H).

84 Jeffrey Chandler, et al., "SARS-CoV-2 Exposure in Wild White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)" (July 29, 2021), (www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.07.29.454326v1).

85 "America's Deer Harvest by the Numbers," *Business Blog* (Sept. 19, 2017), (<https://business.realtree.com/business-blog/america%E2%80%99s-deer-harvest-numbers>); Smriti Mallapaty, "The Coronavirus is Rife in Common US Deer," *Nature* (Aug. 2, 2021), (www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02110-8); Stephen Chen, "US Scientists Suggest Another Animal Link in Tests on Deer Samples," *South China Morning Post* (Aug. 15, 2021).

1850s.⁸⁶ Chinese have been depicted as secretive, contemptuous, mysterious, and implacable,⁸⁷ narratives that re-emerged with the pandemic. Trump said China was secretive about the outbreak's seriousness⁸⁸ and "China's secrecy, deceptions, and cover up allowed it to spread all over the world".⁸⁹ Our detailed timeline of the epidemic's first two months shows however that China's national government robustly combatted a contagion whose global spread was mainly from Europe and the US, not China.⁹⁰

24. Early in the pandemic, many Western analysts asserted that China's authoritarian governance is based on "deceit and incompetence", rendering it incapable of combatting viral outbreaks with the effectiveness of liberal democracies.⁹¹ Asia editor of the UK's *Financial Times* Jamil Anderlini wrote that, "China's authoritarian system is particularly poor at dealing with public health emergencies that require timely, transparent and accurate information."⁹² An oft-repeated claim is that Wuhan and Hubei officials did not release new numbers of cases from January 7-12, 2020 in order to disable the world from knowing there was a pandemic.⁹³ Though some have claimed that local officials were insufficiently transparent about the extent of the outbreak at its inception,⁹⁴ their omissions likely had no substantial effect outside China. Their lapses came at the

86 Gao Hao, *Creating the Opium War: British Imperial Attitudes toward China, 1792-1840* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

87 Esther Romeyn, *Street Scenes: Staging the Self in Immigrant New York, 1880-1924* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 59.

88 "Donald Trump Points to China as Reason for Slow Response to Outbreak in US," *South China Morning Post* (Mar. 22, 2020).

89 "Independence Day: Trump on July 4 Attacks 'Radical Left', Rails at China's 'Secrecy Deceptions,'" *Bloomberg* (July 5, 2020).

90 "Appendix: Timeline of Key Early Covid-19 Events," in Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong, *The God of Plague: Yellow Peril Racialization and the Covid-19 Pandemic*, ms. in progress, 314-349.

91 Ariana Berengaut, "Democracies are Best at Fighting Outbreaks," *Atlantic* (Feb. 24, 2020); "Diseases Like Covid-19 are Deadlier in Non-Democracies, even though China Claims Otherwise," *The Economist* (Feb.18, 2020), (www.twaku.com/DataCareer).

92 Jamil Anderlini, "Xi Faces China's Chernobyl Moment," *Financial Times* (Feb. 11, 2020).

93 "China Didn't Warn Public of Likely Epidemic for Six Days," *AP* (Apr. 15, 2020).

94 Jacques deLisle and Shen Kui, "Lessons from China's Response to COVID-19: Shortcomings, Successes, and Prospects for Reform in China's Regulatory State," *University of Pennsylvania Asian Law Review* 16:1 (2020), 66-149.

epidemic's infancy, when even full disclosure would not have influenced other States' policies, because there were then so few cases.⁹⁵ How many cases there were then—around January 13, 2020—is unclear, as definitions of a case were being debated and changed. There may have been a few dozen or perhaps hundreds of cases in China,⁹⁶ but no deaths outside China. Even when it became obvious that there would be a pandemic, "Some countries, notably in north and southeast Asia, took the threat seriously [while] others—among them the US, Brazil and to some extent the UK—were less alert to the danger."⁹⁷ It is common knowledge that Sweden even opted for natural herd immunity, with no active public health measures taken. Imperial College London epidemiologist Katharina Hauck has observed that more transparency about the very low numbers in January would not likely have changed much about the response of countries to the outbreak.⁹⁸

25. In the US, Council on Foreign Relations public health analyst Laurie Garrett, however, wrote of "How China's Coronavirus Incompetence Endangers the World," claiming that,

China now faces international vilification and potential domestic unrest as it blunders through continued cover-ups, lies, and repression that have already failed to stop the virus and may well be fanning the flames of its spread [...] China is [...] making a crisis into a catastrophe.⁹⁹

26. Trump also pronounced on "Chinese incompetence",¹⁰⁰ tweeting that it was the "incompetence of China and nothing else, that did this mass Worldwide

95 华生 (Hua Sheng), "疫情改变中的世界: 历史关口的中国战略选择 (中...续) ——武汉保卫战: 从错失战机、惨烈退守到逆转反攻 (七)" (The world changed by the epidemic: China's strategic point at a historic turning point—the fight to protect Wuhan: from missing the best opportunities in the battle to retreat to counter-attack, no. 7), 微信 (May 5, 2020), (https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/m6f_dx4jtyRL60k3G5AIRw).

96 "First Case of New Mystery Virus Identified Outside of China," ABC News (Jan. 14, 2020).

97 David Pilling, "How Africa Fought the Pandemic and What Coronavirus has Taught the World," *Financial Times* (Oct. 26, 2020).

98 Eduardo Baptista and Holly Chik, "WHO Wants End to 'Panic-Then-Forget' Approach to Epidemics," *South China Morning Post* (Dec. 10, 2020).

99 Laurie Garrett, *Foreign Policy* (Feb. 15, 2020), (foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/15/coronavirus-xi-jinping-chinas-incompetence-endangered-the-world/).

100 "Donald Trump Slams China for Spreading Coronavirus and Incursion into India," *Eurasian Times* (June 19, 2020).

killing!”¹⁰¹ Some anti-Trump US analysts have agreed.¹⁰² That notion partly derives from the idea that liberal democracies must be superior to authoritarian systems as to all positive attributes.¹⁰³ It also implicates the Yellow Peril notion that Chinese cannot perform as well as Westerners on any beneficial public task.¹⁰⁴ Western observers have long pronounced Chinese incapable of aiding the commonweal. American missionary Reverend Arthur H. Smith lived for 54 years in China and in one of his many books on China praised by US and UK media in the early 20th Century, stated that, “No Chinese can comprehend for a moment such a notion as is embodied in the phrase *pro bono publico*. He never heard of such a thing and what is more he never wants to hear of it.”¹⁰⁵ Chinese were again portrayed in 2020 as rejecting or mishandling actions that might serve the public good. A University of Helsinki scholar has noted “two anti-Chinese views” brought together in US discourse of the pandemic: “the malevolence and callousness of China’s pursuit of world dominance” and “Chinese incompetence”.¹⁰⁶

The *Wall Street Journal* ran an op-ed piece by a prominent columnist that claimed the Chinese government was ineffective vis-a-vis the epidemic. Its headline, “China is the Real Sick Man of Asia,” invoked a classic Yellow Peril slogan used to disparage Chinese in the early 20th Century. The op-ed called China’s government “self-serving” and “ineffective” as to the virus and said the epidemic would cause China’s “brittle economy” to melt, shrink China’s presence abroad, and allow the US to revert to being the world’s only superpower.¹⁰⁷ Not long after, however, an inversion occurred as the US was inundated by Covid-19 deaths; so much so that Johns Hopkins University

101 “Donald Trump Blames China’s ‘Incompetence’ for ‘Mass Worldwide Killing’ in Early Morning Tweet,” AFP (May 20, 2020).

102 Daniel Drezner, “The Most Counterintuitive Prediction about World Politics and the Coronavirus,” *Washington Post* (Mar. 30, 2020).

103 David Dodwell, “Under Trump, US Narrative of the China Threat is Simply False,” *South China Morning Post* (July 20, 2020).

104 Harold Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 79; Andrew Whitfield, *Hong Kong, Empire and the Anglo-American Alliance at War* (London: Palgrave, 2001), 211.

105 Arthur Henderson Smith, *Village Life in China: a Study in Sociology* (London: Routledge, 2002 [Library of Alexandria, 1899]).

106 Kinga Polynczuk-Alenius, “The Allure of Conspiracy Theories in a Time of Pandemic,” Helsinki Collegium of Advanced Studies (Apr. 27, 2020), (<https://blogs.helsinki.fi/hcasblog/2020/04/27/the-allure-of-conspiracy-theories-in-a-time-of-pandemic/>).

107 Walter Russell Mead, *Wall Street Journal* (Feb. 3, 2020).

medical historian Marta Hanson could lecture widely on the topic “From Sick Man of Asia to Sick Uncle Sam”.¹⁰⁸

27. It was not China, but three other major countries with rightwing regimes, the US, Brazil and India, that prominently failed against Covid-19. In early 2021 they rated at 86, 96 and 98 on Australia’s Lowy Institute Covid Performance Index of 98 countries/territories. They then had 45% of the world’s Covid-19 cases and, in August 2021, despite their access to vaccines, these three countries still had the same proportion.¹⁰⁹ Countries with a variety of governance systems have done much better, including several with systems like China’s. In mid-August 2021, Vietnam had only one-thirty-fifth the US’s dpm, despite US income per capita being 10 times Vietnam’s. Its performance has been attributed to its “top-down governance”.¹¹⁰ WHO’s representative there has said “Vietnam responded to this outbreak early and proactively,” with a first risk assessment exercise in early January 2020, just after cases in China were reported. A national virus steering committee was formed and “its handling of the pandemic has been strikingly transparent”. Despite few cases, it closed schools in January 2020, began mass quarantines in March and had a national lockdown from April 1. Buildings, streets and communities where even one case arose are quarantined, as are contacts of patients and contacts of contacts. Vietnam’s mobilization resembles its war-time experience and hospitals rely on practices from the 2003 SARS epidemic to handle the patient load.¹¹¹

28. Vietnam’s neighbor Laos has a similar governance system and, as of mid-August 2021, had only 1 dpm. WHO accepts Laos’ figures and has said “[Laos’] Government had responded to the pandemic effectively by making timely decisions to introduce and later ease public health and social measures. With support from WHO and other partners, the Government also made great efforts to prepare the health system for early detection, testing and

108 Ruth Rogaski, “The Manchurian Plague and COVID-19: China, the United States, and the “Sick Man,” Then and Now,” *American Journal of Public Health* 111: 3 (Mar. 2021), 423-429.

109 (<https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/covid-performance/>).

110 “Vietnam’s Top-Down Government Keeps Epidemic at Bay,” *Financial Times* (Mar. 24, 2020).

111 “No Deaths: The World Can Learn from Vietnam’s Coronavirus Response,” DPA (Apr. 13, 2020); George Black, “Vietnam May have the Most Effective Response to Covid-19,” *The Nation* (Apr. 24, 2020).

clinical management.”¹¹² Vietnam and Laos’s successes have not been much covered in Western media, however. Instead, talk is mainly about white-majority New Zealand, which is far from high-population regions and among places, such as Australia and Taiwan, that “have used their geographic insularity as a primary defense against the pandemic.”¹¹³

Apart from case and fatality measures, peoples’ judgments of their governments’ anti-pandemic performance are measured. A Singapore-based pollster asked 12,592 persons in 23 economies in April 2020 to do that. The average score was 40. Highest ranked were China (86), Vietnam (82) and New Zealand (67). The US score was 32 and the UK’s 30.¹¹⁴ In an eight-country summer 2020 Pew survey, the US and UK were the only countries where more people thought their government’s response was “bad,” rather than “good.”¹¹⁵ Another summer 2020 survey asked 10 questions in 19 countries about aspects of government responses. The mean country-level score was 52.95 out of 100 points. China’s was highest at 80.48, then South Korea (74.54). The US was 50.57 and UK 48.66.¹¹⁶ In October 2020, people in 11 Western countries, Japan, and South Korea rated China and US pandemic performances. A median of 61% said China had done a bad job, but 84% said this of the US.¹¹⁷

29. Scientists knowledgeable about the Chinese response to the epidemic generally reject the deceit and incompetence trope. Soon after Western political and media figures claimed China was dissembling and inept in handling

112 “A Confident Health Workforce Strengthens the Lao PDR’s Health System and Covid-19 Response,” WHO (Dec. 10, 2020), (www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/a-confident-health-workforce-strengthens-lao-pdr-s-health-system-and-covid-19-response).

113 Raymond Zhong, “Taiwan Remains an Island Amid the Covid-19 Deluge,” *New York Times* (Jan. 2, 2021).

114 “The World in Crisis: a Global Public Opinion Survey Across 23 Countries (Summary Report),” Toluna-Blackbox Index of Global Crisis Perceptions (May 2020), (<https://blackbox.com.sg/everyone/2020/05/06/most-countries-covid-19-responses-rated-poorly-by-own-citizens-in-first-of-its-kind-global-survey>).

115 “Datawatch: Pandemic Response,” *Financial Times* (Sept. 7, 2020).

116 Jeffrey Lazarus, et al., “COVID-SCORE: A Global Survey to Assess Public Perceptions of Government Responses to COVID-19 (COVID-SCORE-10),” *PLOS One* (Oct. 6, 2020), (<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0240011&type=printable>).

117 “Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries,” Pew (Oct. 6, 2020), (file:///C:/Users/sobarrys/Downloads/PG_2020.10.06_Global-Views-China_FINAL.pdf).

the epidemic, leading UK medical journal *The Lancet* carried a statement endorsed mainly by Western scientists, who wrote that,

the scientists, public health professionals, and medical professionals of China, in particular, have worked diligently and effectively to rapidly identify the pathogen behind this outbreak, put in place significant measures to reduce its impact, and share their results transparently with the global health community. This effort has been remarkable.¹¹⁸

30. The view that China had failed to mitigate the epidemic and had spread it to the world soon became generally untenable among scientists. In July 2020, *The Lancet* published an editorial that stated that China had largely controlled the epidemic and,

When COVID-19 emerged in December 2019, Chinese scientists were quickly able to identify the virus and shared genomic sequencing data internationally on Jan 11, 2020. By the end of January, doctors from mainland China and Hong Kong had characterized the clinical features of patients with COVID-19, person-to-person transmission, genomic characteristics, and epidemiology, warning the world about the threat of COVID-19 [...]¹¹⁹

31. Even in countries where the “index patient” or “patient zero” was Chinese, an outbreak did not necessarily follow. On January 22, 2020, the day Wuhan’s lockdown order issued, Trump said of the virus that, “It’s just one guy from China. We have it completely under control. I’m not worried about a pandemic.” The “one guy” had returned to Washington State from Wuhan on January 15 and was lab-confirmed six days later. He did not foster the US epidemic: none of his 68 post-return contacts caught the virus.¹²⁰ Studies affirm that counter-intuitive result. The few infected Chinese found abroad may not have become significant spreaders because, as UCLA infectious disease specialist Jamie Lloyd-Smith found, “The consistent pattern is that the most common number of [persons to whom a carrier passes the

118 Charles Calisher, et al., “Statement in Support of the Scientists, Public Health Professionals, and Medical Professionals of China Combatting COVID-19,” *Lancet* 395 (Mar. 7, 2020; online, Feb. 18, 2020).

119 “Covid-19 and China: Lessons and the Way Forward,” *The Lancet* 396:10246 (July 25, 2020).

120 “Covid-19 Arrived in Seattle. Where It Went from There Stunned the Scientists,” *New York Times* (Apr. 22, 2020); Dilip Hiro, “Comparing the US and China’s Response to Covid-19,” *The Nation* (Apr. 28, 2020).

disease to] is zero. Most people do not transmit,” but are “dead-ends”. A study of Washington State and Germany also shows that “the coronavirus arrived more than once without starting runaway outbreaks. In these cases, there was little or no transmission, and the virus simply died out.”¹²¹

32. The virus was brought to the world mainly from Europe and the US, as China took concerted action that sharply mitigated the novel viral outbreak. China’s rate of infection outside Hubei has been low and its death rate very low. As of mid-August 2021, 97.3% of China’s 4,636 deaths were among Hubei’s 58.5m people and Hubei had only 79 dpm, one-seventh the world average, while the US’s dpm was 25 times Hubei’s. There were 124 deaths among the 1.3415b Chinese outside Hubei or 0.009 dpm—just one death per 10 million people.¹²² A late 2020 China CDC serological study of 12,000 people outside Hubei found just two with SARS-CoV-2 antibodies,¹²³ indicating to University of Queensland virologist Ian Mackay that the lockdown largely contained the virus in Wuhan.¹²⁴

33. Many US politicians nevertheless continue to assert that China’s failures caused the pandemic. Trump said that, “The world is paying a very big price for what they did. It could have been stopped right where it came from, China. It would have been much better if we had known about this a number of months earlier.”¹²⁵ Sens. Josh Hawley (R-MO) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) stated that China’s “lies, deceit and incompetence” caused Covid-19 to become a pandemic. Cotton added that “China unleashed this pandemic on the world and they should pay the price.”¹²⁶ The disease was subdued in China,

121 Carl Zimmer, “Epidemics Started Later than First Estimated, Study Finds,” *New York Times* (May 29, 2020).

122 “Countries/Areas with Reported Cases of Coronavirus Disease,” Hong Kong Center for Health Protection (Aug. 15, 2021), (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf); “Coronavirus,” Worldometer (Aug. 16, 2021), (www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/).

123 Xin Xu, et al., “Seroprevalence of immunoglobulin M and G antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 in China,” *Nature Medicine* (June 5, 2020), (www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0949-6).

124 Simone McCarthy and Zhang Pinghui, “Did Half a Million People in Wuhan Contract the Coronavirus?” *South China Morning Post* (Dec. 30, 2020).

125 “Trump Blames China for Coronavirus Pandemic,” *CNBC* (Mar. 19, 2020).

126 Jonathan Martin and Maggie Haberman, “G.O.P. Aiming To Make China The Scapegoat,” *New York Times* (Apr. 19, 2020); Mario Parker and Billy House, “Trump’s GOP Blames China for Coronavirus with Eye on 2020 (1),” *Bloomberg Law* (Apr. 15, 2020), (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/coronavirus/trumps-gop-blames-china-for-coronavirus-with-eye-on-2020-1>); “US Senator Tom Cotton

but spread globally mainly from Western Europe and the US. An April 2020 tally found “travel from and within Europe preceded the first coronavirus cases in at least 93 countries across all five continents, accounting for more than half the world’s index cases [...] compared to 27 countries associated with travel from China.”¹²⁷ A later count found that from January 1-March 21, 2020, 164 countries had identifiable “patient zeroes”; 26 were from China or had travelled there, 25 of them in January. The other 138 came mainly from Europe, followed by the US and Iran.¹²⁸ Not only were most countries’ first cases from outside China, so too were most of their imported cases.¹²⁹

34. Before becoming President, Joe Biden was as vituperative as Trump in condemning Chinese leaders.¹³⁰ He excoriated Trump for having “rolled over for the Chinese” and having “praised the Chinese”. Biden asserted that “Chinese authorities were not honest about the early outbreak in Wuhan and sought to cover up the contagion.”¹³¹ To shift the blame to Chinese, Democratic politicians joined the attack on China for having wet markets¹³² and concurred with most aspects of the Republican view of China as liable for the epidemic.¹³³ Some Democrats urged their party to not compete in condemning China for Covid-19, but to instead blame Trump, but affirmed without evidence that “China, at a minimum, covered up evidence of the

Warns America About Coronavirus,” Megadoctor News (Feb. 26, 2020), (<https://megadoctornews.com/u-s-senator-tom-cotton-warns-america-about-coronavirus/>).

127 Joe Penney, “Coronavirus Started in China, But Europe Became the Hub for Its Global Spread,” *The Intercept* (Apr. 2, 2020), (<https://theintercept.com/2020/04/02/coronavirus-europe-travel/>).

128 宁南山, “西方明明不占理, 为什么总能处于道德高地?” (Why does the West always take the moral high-ground when it’s obviously unreasonable?), 观察者网 (Dec. 9, 2020), (<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/m7oalxf12x3Ez7ghg2SiZg>).

129 Authors’ table of “first cases” and “most imported cases” by country.

130 Yang Kuang-shun, “Joe Biden’s Record on China and Taiwan,” *The Diplomat* (Mar. 6, 2020).

131 “Who’s Tougher on China? Trump and Biden Attack Each Other in Dueling Ads,” *AP* (Apr. 18, 2020).

132 “Trump Officials are Said to Press Spies to Link Virus and Wuhan Labs,” *New York Times* (Apr. 30, 2020); “White House Accuses US Broadcaster Voice of America of Promoting ‘Beijing’s Propaganda,’” *South China Morning Post* (Apr. 11, 2020); “Who’s Tougher; ‘Biden Focus on Trump ‘Failures Over China,’” *Reuters* (May 14, 2020).

133 Alex Ward, “12 Experts on How the US Should Hold China Accountable for the Coronavirus,” *Vox* (Apr. 16, 2020).

outbreak and was too slow in sharing complete information with international health authorities.”¹³⁴ A few Democratic politicians disavowed the idea that the pandemic derived from Chinese cultural attributes, such as wet markets, or disputed that Chinese were not sufficient in disseminating information. The National Republican Congressional Committee portrayed them as propaganda-spewing “Chinese assets”, disincentivizing other US politicians from breaking with the blame-China consensus.¹³⁵ That consensus continued into the Biden era. Thus, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said “President Trump was right in taking a tougher approach to China.” He “blamed Chinese errors for making the pandemic worse.”¹³⁶

35. Contrary to the trope of Chinese “deceit and incompetence,” the US government knew about the contagion almost as soon as China’s government did—very early in the epidemic, but long before Trump took any action. A US official with access to the intelligence briefings that Trump officials and Congress received has said that “Intelligence agencies ‘have been warning on this since January [...] Donald Trump may not have been expecting this, but a lot of other people in the government were—they just couldn’t get him to do anything about it. The system was blinking red.’” CDC Director Robert Redfield “learned on December 31 of a ‘cluster of 27 cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology reported in Wuhan, China.’” Wuhan’s government had stated that day that a Pneumonia of Unknown Cause (PUC) existed. “Chinese colleagues,” including China CDC head George Gao Fu, told Redfield on January 3 of a possible new virus. Redfield immediately told HHS Secretary Alex Azar, who tried to contact Trump. He did not get through to him until January 18 and, even then Trump “interjected to ask about vaping”.¹³⁷ Trump was warned about the virus more than a dozen times in Presidential Daily Briefings (PDBs) in January and February, but “did not seem to absorb the warnings [even though] by mid-to-late January, the virus was brought up more often as either a focal

134 Rachel Espilin and Stephen Wertheim, “Can Democrats Avoid Trump’s China Trap?” *New York Times* (May 11, 2020).

135 Parker and House, *Trump’s GOP Blames China*.

136 “Biden’s Top Diplomat Pick Says Trump ‘right’ to Be Tough on China,” *Nikkei Asia* (Jan. 20, 2021); Walter Russell Mead, “Can Biden’s Resolve Weather Putin and Xi,” *Wall Street Journal* (Apr. 13, 2021).

137 Glenn Kessler, “How Much Pressure Did Trump Put on China for Access Concerning the Coronavirus?” *Washington Post* (Apr. 3, 2020); “U.S. Intelligence Reports from January and February Warned about a Likely Pandemic,” *Washington Post* (Mar. 22, 2020).

point of the report or ‘executive update’ and was verbally conveyed to Trump.”¹³⁸

36. Almost as soon as Chinese scientists knew of the PUC, some US scientists were told about it. Columbia University epidemiologist Dr. Ian Lipkin was in China from early January 2020 and discussed the outbreak at the highest level of the Chinese government. He first learnt of the new disease from contacts in China, where it emerged, in mid-December. By early January, he was urging Chinese counterparts to publish the virus’s genetic sequencing to aid research and visiting senior Chinese officials, including Premier Li Keqiang, to discuss the disease.

37. Lipkin later criticized the US and UK governments for being slow to react. He blamed their insufficient and inadequate testing and tracing for rising fatality numbers. Lipkin characterized the Covid-19-related attacks emanating from the US as “baiting and nationalism”.¹³⁹

38. Besides US officials and scientists learning of the outbreak directly from Chinese sources, they also heard from WHO. US infectious diseases epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove heads WHO’s Emerging Diseases and Zoonosis Unit. Moreover, “embedded US government secondees [were] working at the WHO headquarters in Geneva” from the epidemic’s onset, including 15-16 US CDC staff and a couple other HHS scientists, most “detailed specifically to work with [WHO] on its COVID-19 response.” WHO’s Director, Ethiopia-born, UK-trained immunologist Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said, “Having CDC staff means there is nothing hidden from the US, from day one. Because these are Americans working with us.” A CDC official served on WHO’s emergency committee to assess whether there was a pandemic. Another CDC official sent WHO information to CDC’s own daily “incident management” conferences and “Information about what WHO was planning to do or announce was often shared [with HHS] days in advance.”¹⁴⁰

138 “Washington Post: Trump Downplayed Coronavirus Despite More than a Dozen Warnings in Daily Briefings,” CNN (Apr. 28, 2020).

139 Katrina Manson, “Virologist Behind ‘Contagion’ Film Criticizes Leaders’ Slow Response,” Financial Times (Apr. 17, 2020).

140 Karen DeYoung, et al., “Americans at World Health Organization Transmitted Real-time Information about Coronavirus to Trump Administration,” Washington Post (Apr. 19, 2020); “WHO Insists it Hid Nothing, Sounded Virus Alarm from Start,” AFP (Apr. 21, 2020).

39. Chinese authorities sent the US government 30 messages about the epidemic from January 3 to February 3. Moreover, “US officials in Beijing had at least 10 telephonic or in-person meetings—and likely more—with WHO officials [in China]” in January. Officials from the US’s HHS, CDC, and National Institutes of Health (NIH) “confer[ed] regularly in Beijing with WHO officials, twice in the week of Jan. 6, three times in the week of Jan. 13, three times in the week of Jan. 20 and twice in the week of Jan. 27. These were in addition to informal calls between US and WHO officials in Beijing.” CDC Beijing office head R.J. Simonds had at least eight meetings with WHO in January and the HHS health attaché in Beijing had at least three then. Meetings continued in February and March, with WHO officials based in China, including Drs. Tedros and Ryan. A WHO mission went to Wuhan in mid-February,¹⁴¹ with Americans from CDC and NIH and “its leaders said they were given wide latitude to travel, visit facilities and talk with people”.¹⁴² That visit was the third to Wuhan during the epidemic by specialists from outside the Chinese mainland. The first, on January 13-14, was of experts from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau¹⁴³ and the second was by WHO specialists on January 20-21.¹⁴⁴

40. Scientists demur on the “China lied, people died” slogan propagated by Trump trade advisor Peter Navarro.¹⁴⁵ He will be remembered for quoting non-existent “economist” Ron Vara—an anagram of the name Navarro—in five of his books. They made statements such as “You’ve got to be nuts to eat Chinese food” and “Only the Chinese can turn a leather sofa into an acid bath, a baby crib into a lethal weapon and a cellphone battery into heart-piercing shrapnel.”¹⁴⁶ Navarro later said that “Joe Biden is the candidate of

141 Dana Milbank, “The Problem Isn’t a Lack of Information. It’s Trump,” *Washington Post* (Apr. 21, 2020).

142 Richard Perez-Pena and Donald McNeill, Jr., “‘A Window’ to Stop the Virus: Warnings Came Early and Often,” *New York Times* (Apr. 17, 2020).

143 Nichola Smith, “They Wanted to Take Us Sightseeing,” *Telegraph* (May 6, 2020).

144 “Mission Summary: WHO Field Visit to Wuhan, China 20-21 January 2020,” WHO (Jan. 22, 2020) (www.who.int/china/news/detail/22-01-2020-field-visit-wuhan-china-jan-2020).

145 “WH Trade Adviser Peter Navarro: ‘China Lied, People Died’,” *Washington Times* (May 4, 2020).

146 Alan Rappeport, “Who is Ron Vara?: Trade Advisor Invents an Expert,” *New York Times* (Oct. 17, 2019).

the Chinese Communist Party”¹⁴⁷ and that Trump won the US’s presidential election.¹⁴⁸

Wanda Markotter, Director of the Centre for Viral Zoonoses at the University of Pretoria has said no evidence exists that China’s government engaged in a cover-up.¹⁴⁹ The claim by John Sawers, ex-head of British intelligence agency MI6, that “there was a brief period in December and January when the Chinese were indeed concealing [the virus] from the West”¹⁵⁰ is thus inaccurate. There is no evidence the Chinese national government concealed knowledge of the epidemic from entities outside China after it became aware it was ongoing. There is also no attestation of “Chinese incompetence,” although Western sources continued to press that trope in 2021 through flawed claims that China-made vaccines are inferior to Western-made ones, impugning Chinese and seeking to deny an anti-pandemic option to developing countries,¹⁵¹ where China is “the first provider of aid [...] in particular to some of the poorest African nations.”¹⁵²

V. Conclusion: Covid-19 Yellow Perilism and anti-China mobilization

41. Few Covid-19-related actions against China that US politicians seek may be implemented, but their campaign is consequential. The main effect of such actions is to further embed Yellow Peril ideology, through tropes of Chinese cruelty, deceit, incompetence, and infectiousness, among peoples long-immersed in the racist themes that now shape a distinctly negative US view of China’s role in the pandemic. A May 2020 poll showed 37% of Americans thought China did a poor job in dealing with the epidemic; by July, 64% thought so, and 43% said a “very bad job”. That was despite China having

147 “White House Turns on Fauci as Disaster Grows Out of Aggressive State Openings,” CNN (July 13, 2020).

148 “White House Under Assumption of ‘Second Trump Term’, Says Top Trade Adviser Peter Navarro,” South China Morning Post (Nov. 14, 2020).

149 Simone McCarthy, “On the Path of an Elusive Killer,” South China Morning Post (July 8, 2020).

150 “British Think Tank, German Newspaper Calls for Compensation,” ABC News (Apr. 20, 2020).

151 Achal Prabhala and Chee Yoke Ling, “It’s Time to Trust China’s and Russia’s Vaccine,” New York Times (Feb. 9, 2021).

152 Anne-Sylvanine Chassany, “West Must Pay Attention to Russia and China’s Vaccine Diplomacy,” Financial Times (Feb. 11, 2021).

few additional cases and almost no deaths from Covid-19 from May to July, while the US had millions of cases and tens of thousands of deaths. Some 78% of polled Americans said the Chinese government's initial handling of the outbreak is a great deal (51%) or fair amount (27%) to blame for the pandemic's spread, while only 20% said it was not much or not at all to blame, and 50% wanted to "hold China responsible for the role it played in the outbreak of the coronavirus, even if it means worsening economic relations".¹⁵³

42. Americans' low ratings of China's pandemic performance contrasts with the rest of the world however. A June 2020 survey of 120,000 people in 53 countries found the US was one of only two countries where more people thought the US responded better than China to the pandemic. Only a third of people globally thought the US responded well, but more than 60% said that of China.¹⁵⁴ A Pew survey of 14 developed countries released in October 2020 showed an average of 84% convinced the US had done a bad job with the coronavirus.¹⁵⁵

43. The negative "China and Covid-19" narrative is inseparable from the portrayals of Chinese since the 19th Century. The Yellow Peril worldview is now imbricated in a bi-partisan anti-China mobilization that reflects a dialectical relationship of politics and racialization, akin to what the Supreme Court displayed in the *Civil Rights Cases* of 1883 when it stripped the US government of power to outlaw private racial discrimination.¹⁵⁶ The great abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass saw that as resulting from a political motive—reconciling Southern racists with the US—and the view that the US government had no moral obligation to obviate the racial oppression the decision would unleash.¹⁵⁷ Justice John Marshall Harlan predicted that oppression in his dissent. Ironically, however, even the famously liberal-minded Harlan also endorsed Yellow Perilism. Described by a commentator as "a faithful opponent of the constitutional rights of Chinese for much of his

153 "Americans Fault China for its Role in the Spread of Covid-19," Pew (July 30, 2020), (www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/07/30/americans-fault-china-for-its-role-in-the-spread-of-covid-19/).

154 "Democracy Perception Index – 2020," Dahlia Research (June 15, 2020), (<https://daliaresearch.com/blog/democracy-perception-index-2020/>).

155 Chris Buckley, "Distrust of China Jumps to New Highs in Democratic Nations," New York Times (Oct. 6, 2020).

156 109 U.S. 3 (1883).

157 "The Civil Rights Cases: Frederick Douglas, Oct. 22, 1883," Teaching American History, (<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-civil-rights-case/>).

career on the Court”,¹⁵⁸ Harlan voted in 1889 to uphold exclusion of Chinese from immigrating to the US, because they were “unassimilable”.¹⁵⁹ In his famous dissent from a case that denied legal equality to African Americans in 1896, Harlan nevertheless wrote that Chinese are “a race so different from our own that we do not permit those belonging to it to become citizens of the United States”.¹⁶⁰ When in 1898 the Court did recognize the right of US-born Chinese to be citizens, Harlan dissented, because he saw Chinese as too ethnically alien.¹⁶¹

44. Anti-China Covid-19-related ideas are today promoted by conservatives, but condoned by liberal-minded 21st Century Harlans. They are inherently malign. More than 9,000 anti-Asian incidents occurred in the US between March 19, 2020 and June 30, 2021, some 1,240 of them involving physical violence.¹⁶² Cynthia Choi, co-founder of Stop AAPI [Asian American Pacific Islander] Hate and co-director of Chinese for Affirmative Action, observed in August 2021 that “When the US vilifies China with words and policy, our data show that it endangers the lives of the AAPI community. To protect AAPIs living in the US, we must condemn the anti-China rhetoric and discriminatory policies [...]”¹⁶³ These ideas can only be partly counteracted through repudiation of the anti-China mobilization’s empirical assertions, however, as the “liar’s dividend” means that those spreading disinformation benefit even when their efforts are disproved.¹⁶⁴ Their “benefit” is the idea that China and Chinese engage in reprehensible conduct, while Westerners do not, a key Yellow Peril notion that has several times paved the

158 Gabriel J. Chin, “The Plessy Myth: Justice Harlan and the Chinese Cases,” *Iowa Law Review* 82 (1996), 151-182.

159 *Chae Chan Ping v. United States*, 130 US 581 (1889).

160 *Plessy v. Ferguson* 163 US 537 (1896) (dissent).

161 *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* 169 US 649 (1898) (dissent Fuller, J. joined by Harlan, J).

162 Aggie Yellow Horse, et al., “Stop AAPI Hate National Report” (Aug. 2021), (<https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Stop-AAPI-Hate-National-Report-Final.pdf>).

163 “Press Statement,” Stop AAPI Hate (Aug. 12, 2021), (https://stopaapihate.org/stop-aapi-hate-national-report-3/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=stop-aapi-hate-national-report-3).

164 Kelly McBride, “The Liar’s Dividend is Dangerous for Journalists: Here’s How to Fight It,” *Poynter* (May 17, 2019), (www.poynter.org/ethics-trust/2019/the-liars-dividend-is-dangerous-for-journalists-heres-how-to-fight-it/).

road to wars against Asian peoples. A thorough repudiation of Covid-19 racism requires recognizing that Yellow Peril tropes infuse the US-led anti-China mobilization. That in turn means a disavowal of elites who use such tropes as devices to maintain a hegemony that ill-suits the interests of the world's peoples.